

Amendments to the Specification:

Please delete the paragraph at page 5, lines 3-22 and replace it with the following amended paragraph:

It has been discovered that synthetic oligonucleotides directed to a region of the HIV gag inhibit HIV-1 and HIV-2 infection of mammalian cells. These discoveries have been exploited to develop the present invention, which in its broadest aspect, provides synthetic oligonucleotides having a nucleotide sequence specifically complementary to nucleotides 324 to 345~~325 to 346~~ of a conserved gag region of the HIV genome set forth as SEQ ID NO:5~~SEQ ID NO:3~~. These oligonucleotides have 21 nucleotides ("21mers") which are linked via phosphorothioate internucleotide linkages. Such phosphorothioate linkages contain a substitution of sulfur for oxygen, thereby rendering the oligonucleotide resistant to nucleolytic degradation. The phosphorothioate linkages may be mixed R_p and S_p enantiomers, or they may be stereoregular or substantially stereoregular in either R_p or S_p form (see Iyer et al. (1995) *Tetrahedron Asymmetry* 6:1051-1054).